

THE PROVINCE OF QUEBEC  
ITS HISTORY AND ITS PEOPLE

G. MCALEER

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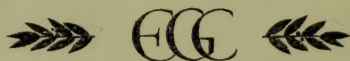
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Yours Very truly,  
Geo. W. Alger.



# THE PROVINCE OF QUEBEC, Its History, and Its People.

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BY  
GEORGE MCALEER.

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# THE PROVINCE OF QUEBEC.

## ITS HISTORY, AND ITS PEOPLE.

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Despite the works of History, the labors of Historical Societies, hand-books of travel, the army of summer tourists, and the wonderful enterprise of the newspaper world, the old saying that "not one-half of the world knows how the other half lives" is almost as true today as it was in the distant past.

Stretching away to the north of the New England States and beyond is the Province of Quebec, a country that is a veritable *terra incognita* to the great majority of their neighbors to the south, the people of the United States. To the great majority of these the name recalls only a very limited territory where winter reigns during the greater part of the year, devoid of interest, and peopled with an unprogressive if not a very inferior race—a downtrodden people whose rights are denied them by an exacting and oppressive government beyond the seas.

A little time given to a consideration of this portion of the western hemisphere—its extent, physical characteristics, history, and the everyday life of the people—may not be without interest and value while serving to make neighbors better acquainted with each other and appreciated. A little reflection and thoughtful consideration will also teach lessons of toleration and justice to the residents and law-making powers in the United States, the boasted land of "freedom, equal rights and justice," but where in many things these high sounding and seductive claims are not so happily exemplified as in the less pretentious Country north of the forty-fifth parallel of latitude.

Within the bounds of the Province of Quebec is embraced a territory many times larger than all New England, a territory rich and varied in scenic beauty and grandly picturesque. The

Appalachian range of mountains extends into the eastern portion of the province, and the Laurentian chain stretches away for hundreds of miles in the northern part, contributing variety and grandeur to the whole country.

### Lakes and Rivers.

Lakes are scattered in abundance throughout the Province, which gem the landscape and primeval forest, and which well reward the tourist, artist and sportsman by their beauty, extent and wealth of gamest fish. Lake St. John having an area of 260 square miles, is the largest. Temiscamingue is next with an area of 126 square miles, besides numerous others of smaller size and lesser importance.

The mighty St. Lawrence, ranking with the largest rivers of the world, after leaving the Great Lakes and the awe-inspiring Niagara Falls, lends a charm to the Thousand Islands, and cuts in twain the southeastern portion of the country through which its mighty volume of waters flow in a north-easterly direction for hundreds of miles until lost in the ocean beyond. It has as principal tributaries the Ottawa, 600 hundred miles long; the Ste. Maurice, 400 miles long; the Richelieu which is the outlet of Lake Champlain; the famed Saguenay, which performs a similar service for Lake St. John and the country beyond; and many others of lesser note.

Most of these rivers abound in scenery unsurpassed elsewhere, and in cascades and waterfalls that prove a revelation, surprise and delight to the beholder. The Falls of Shawinigan in the Ste. Maurice, 24 miles above Three Rivers, are 150 feet high; the Falls of the Montmorency, 8 miles from Quebec, are 250 feet, and the rocky gorge through which the Saguenay pours its turbulent waters for a hundred miles, is startling in its almost perpendicular cliffs of rock which kiss the clouds, and which in majesty, grandeur, and extent are without a rival in the world.

In the more northern parts the extensive forests, stretching away to the land of perpetual winter, furnish a home for an abundance of large game—bear, deer, caribou and moose—which is eagerly sought by sportsmen of this and foreign countries for

the pleasure and benefit which reward such adventure and communing with nature, and also by the hunters and trappers of the Hudson Bay Fur Company, and the *Courier de Bois*, for the peltry which commands good prices and meets with ready sale in the fur markets of the world. They also furnish employment and remunerative wages to vast numbers of people who are employed in getting out timber and lumber for domestic need and export, and in more recent times for wood pulp, which has revolutionized the paper making of the world.

Throughout the southern portion the climate is mild and salubrious, the soil is strong and rich, and nearly all the varieties of fruit, vegetables, and cereals of the New England States are successfully cultivated. With increased population, and the passing of the fur bearing animals in the older settled portion of the Province, farming became the principal occupation of the people outside cities and the more populous centres. Surplus hay, horses, cattle, butter, lumber and other products of land and forest found a ready market in the United States in exchange for textile goods, agricultural implements, and other manufactured articles, until the termination of the Reciprocity treaty between the two countries in A. D. 1865, after the close of the civil war in the United States, when duties were imposed upon merchandise passing from one country into the other.

### **Relations with their Neighbors.**

During the existence of this treaty there was developed a very close bond of interest and friendship between the people of the two countries, and the sentiment in favor of annexation was deep and wide spread ; but on its termination in 1865 a new policy was adopted and developed by the people of Canada and all this is now changed.

The termination of the Reciprocity treaty paved the way for and led up to the Confederation of the Provinces into the Dominion of Canada, the establishment of foreign markets, and of factories for the production of the various goods, tools and merchandise previously purchased in the United States. This has proved so successful and advantageous for the people, and



has so fostered and stimulated a national spirit that now but very few if any will be found to favor, much less advocate union with the United States.

In agricultural districts, particularly in the Eastern Townships, much attention is now given to the manufacture of cheese, of very superior quality, large quantities of which are exported and find a ready sale in the markets of England and on the Continent.

To properly understand and appreciate the conditions, customs, and practices which now obtain in rural communities in the older settled parts of the Province where the descendants of the original settlers overwhelmingly predominate, which so savor of mediævalism, and which appear so quaint and fascinating to the outside world, it will be desirable to go back to the early days of authentic history and sketch in outline some of the leading events connected with the exploration, colonization, and the establishment of government in this northern portion of the New World.

### Early History.

In enterprise, daring, and success France led the way. So far as available records go they prove that the portion of Canada (by which name at one time all the British possessions in North America were designated), now known as the Province of Quebec, was discovered during the early years of the Sixteenth Century by Jaques Cartier who sailed up the St. Lawrence River in A. D. 1535, before Puritanism was known in the world, and nearly one hundred years before the Puritans set foot upon the soil of America. He made other voyages the following and subsequent years when he devoted more time to exploration and acquiring a knowledge of the country and its strange people. Other French explorers subsequently visited these shores before the coming of Samuel de Champlain in A. D. 1608, who established a colony at Stadacona where the City of Quebec now is.

The heart of France then thrilled with missionary zeal and many devoted priests accompanied these colonists to impart the blessings of religion, spiritual comfort, and guidance.

Many missionaries of noble birth and highest attainments also left behind station and place in their native land and devoted their lives to the elevation of the red man from the depths of paganism and idolatry to the heights of Christianity. These apostolic men, in obedience to the command of the Master, buried themselves in the wilderness and spent the rest of their lives amid scenes of squalor and filth, in deprivation and suffering, even heroically meeting death in the discharge of their sacred duties. Words are not necessary to add to the pathos of such lives as are recorded in the "Jesuit Relations" by the pen of the Rev. Ennemond Masse, S. J.: "This life is without order and without daily fare, without bread, without salt, and often without anything; always moving on and changing; in the wind, in the air, and in bad weather; for a roof, a wretched cabin; for a couch, the earth; for rest and quiet, odors, cries and songs; for medicine, hunger and hard work."

They sought not the plaudits of men, yet the pens of our greatest historians and poets have embalmed their memory in the minds and hearts of a grateful posterity, and recorded their heroic achievements for God and civilization upon the brightest pages of history and literature. The heroic deeds, sacrifices and sufferings of Le Caron, Breboul, Daniel, Lallemand, Jogues, Rasles, and unnumbered others of their companions, together with the devotion, privation and toil of the sainted women who sacrificed all that the world holds dear to aid in the good work, are as a luminous cloud of inspiration, triumph and glory, which will continue to reflect lustre upon their nationality, their religion, and their adopted country until the end of time.

### The Habitans.

The colonists brought with them deep religious conviction and love for the Church of their fathers, in which they were born and reared. To them a good life was more important than honors and riches. In their every day life they exemplified the Christian virtues and squared their conduct by the Golden Rule. When differences arose between them they were usually settled by arbitration, or by their parish priest and spiritual guide, and such decision was cheerfully accepted as



final without violence to christian charity. However humble their lot, they ever strove to make their Church attractive and worthy the Divine Presence. They could not afford marble statuary for its adornment, and so casts from the works of the masters, of the Holy Family, an Apostle, patron saint, or other religious subjects, were procured to embellish it and make its teachings more realistic and lasting. During the winter season, and in the far north where natural flowers could not be obtained, artificial flowers were substituted for decorating the altar. No effort was spared to follow the full and beautiful ceremonial of the Church according to the Roman ritual, as well as the customs of the Church in motherland, and many of these are faithfully observed by their descendants and successors to this day, some of which will be noticed later.

### English Intolerance and Injustice.

The enterprise and success of the people of France in colonization in North America, and of other nations in other parts of the Western Hemisphere, aroused the jealousy of England and stimulated to activity the national traits of conquest, aggrandizement, and domination. The people of England at that time were so far behind in the race with the nations of Continental Europe, and so little understood the work of successful colonization, which they were prompted to undertake through jealousy because of the success of other nations, that their first attempts in Maine, Massachusetts, and Virginia were rank failures. The English settlers seemed better fitted for the life of pirates and the practice of robbery, rapine and bloodshed than the less exciting and more humane life of the colonists from other countries. In this day of civilization and enlightenment, when so much incense is burned at the shrine of Anglo-Saxonism, this may seem to some a bold and unwarranted charge, but an appeal to the history of the times will amply verify its truthfulness.

We have only to recall the Royal robberies of the times—Cathedrals, Monasteries, educational and eleemosynary institutions and others—and the bloody history of the fleets of pirat-

ical vessels fitted out in England to prey upon the commerce of the world, the brutality of the buccaneers of which Claude Duval, Jack Cade, and Captain Kidd are types, and the blood curdling records of a Coote, Child, Drake, Hawkins and Raleigh—some of whose piratical triumphs were rewarded with the honors of knighthood—to realize a striking picture of the times, and of the ethics governing and animating those seated in high places of government, and even upon the throne itself. For the present we must be content with the testimony of an English historian who will not be accused of bias or prejudice, but who unlike too many of his successors who endeavor to apologise for, explain away, or altogether omit the unpalatable truths of the times, has the honesty to admit them in all their repulsive hideousness.

### Macaulay's Testimony.

After going into the subject of pirates and piracy in England to very considerable length, the vast amounts realized therefrom, and the adulation and honors heaped upon the successful marauders and murderers, Macaulay says :

“The Indian Ocean, meanwhile, swarmed with pirates of whose rapacity and cruelty frightful stories were told. Many of these men, it was said, came from the North American Colonies, and carried back to these colonies the spoils gained by crime. Even the Puritans of New England, who in sanctimonious austerity surpassed even their brethren in Scotland, were accused of conniving at the wickedness.”

This quotation also throws an interesting side light upon the character of some of the New England colonists now so generally praised and even apotheosized.

Jealous of the growth of the French colonies, and of the success of the black robe in converting the aborigines to Christianity, the British colonists were ever on the alert to discover opportunity for plunder, when an unprovoked attack would be made. The missionary being the special object of their hatred was treated with great indignity and not infrequently slain, the people butchered, the settlement robbed, and what could not be carried away was given to the flames.

It is worthy of note that in the first conflict between the English and French on this continent the English were the aggressors. In 1613 the marauding freebooter, Argall, sailed from Virginia to the coast of Maine, where he attacked and destroyed the French settlement of Ste. Saveur, now Mount Desert, killing Brother Gabriel du Thet, and giving to the flames such booty as he could not carry away. Thus was shed the first blood that flowed so copiously and crimsoned the soil through so many subsequent years as a result of bigoted intolerance and unreasoning hate. Later writers have endeavored to apologize for if not condone the crime of Argall by saying that he was but one of the common herd of freebooters and outlaws of the time, without authority for the marauding expedition, and that his conduct would not be approved by those in authority. To prove that this is but special pleading, untruthful, and in harmony with the attempt very generally made during all the years since to gloss over the noted short comings and crimes of the early English settlers in this country, we have but to recall the facts that Argall, in obedience to the orders of his superiors, soon afterwards plundered and destroyed the French settlements at Ste. Croix, Port Royal, and other places, and that when he returned to England later he was rewarded by being appointed Deputy Governor of Virginia in 1617, succeeding to the office of Governor soon after.

### **A Foul Blot upon Massachusetts.**

Such brutality and devastation was continued during many generations without interruption or remonstrance from those charged with the affairs of government, and too often it was instigated by them, but we must be content with the recital of one other instance, not only because of its fiendish atrocity, but also because it had its origin and endorsement in the state of Massachusetts; to which honor and praise is now so generally and bountifully given.

In A. D. 1646, at the earnest solicitation of the Abnaki Indians, Father Gabriel Druillettes, S. J., was sent by his Superior from Sillery near Quebec to establish a Mission on the river Kennebec.

He left Sillery August 29, 1646, for his destination, and so far as known to history he was the first white man who ever penetrated the unbroken wilderness from the St. Lawrence into the wilds of central Maine. He journeyed to his destination by the same waterways traversed by Benedict Arnold and his detachment of Continental soldiers to attack Quebec more than one hundred years afterwards, and which were then well known. He located at Narantsouk, now Norridgewock, where he erected his mission cross and was soon surrounded by a large congregation of peaceful converts and neophytes.

This Mission was continued successfully for nearly eighty years, when the Missionary then in charge was butchered and the Mission destroyed by zealots from the English Colonists of Massachusetts.

The New England Courant, August 24th, 1724, says: "On Saturday last arrived Captain Johnson Harman from his expedition against the Indians at Norridgewock, and brought with him 28 scalps, one of which is Father Rasles their priest."

And in "Massachusetts Council Records," Vol. 8, page 71-2, and "Westbrook Papers," page 155, we read:

"At a Council held at the Council Chamber in Boston, on Saturday, August 22, 1724, Present:

His Honor William Dummer, Esq., Lt. Gov. Penn Townsend, Add. Davenport, Adam Winthrop, Nathan Byfield, Esqrs.; John Clark, Esq., Daniel Oliver, Esq., Edw. Bromfield, Thomas Fitch, Captain Johnson Harman being arrived from the Eastward with Indian scalps, together with the scalp of Sebastian Ralle, the Jesuit and Missionary among the Norridgewock Indians and the Standard of y<sup>e</sup> Sd Tribe of Indians, was directed to attend in Council, and there gave a short narrative of his march to Norridgewock (with four Companies of Soldiers under his command) and of his action at the Sd Place, the twelfth instant, where he destroyed a great number of the enemy, many of whom being slain or drowned in the river, he could not recover their bodies.

His Honor, the Lieutenant Governor, in consideration of the extraordinary service of y<sup>e</sup> Sd Captain Harman, presented him



with a Commission for Lieutenant Colonel of his Majesty's forces eastward under the command of Coll. Thomas Westbrook. Coll. Johnson Harman made solemn oath that the twenty-seven scalps above mentioned (which were produced in Council) were the scalps of rebel or enemy Indians slain by him and the forces under his command, and that they had taken four Indian prisoners.

Pursuant to the Act, entitled an Act to encourage the persecution of the enemy and rebels :

Advised and consented that a warrant be made out to the treasurer to pay unto y<sup>e</sup> Sd. Coll. Johnson Harman, the sum of four hundred and five pounds for twenty-seven Indian scalps, and the further sum of twenty pounds for four Indian prisoners slain and taken as aforesaid ; y<sup>e</sup> Sd sum to be by him distributed to the officers and soldiers concerned therein, as y<sup>e</sup> Sd Act directs.

Coll. Johnson Harman likewise made oath that the other scalp was that of Sebastian Ralle, a Jesuit, who appeared at the head of the Indians and obstinately resisted the forces, wounding seven of the English and resolutely refusing to give or take quarter.

Pursuant therefore to a resolve of the General Assembly passed at their session begun and held the 13th of July, 1720, in the words following, viz.:

"This Court being credibly informed that Mons. Ralle, the Jesuit residing among the Eastern Indians, has not only on several occasions of late affronted His Majesty's Government of this Province but has also been the incendiary that has instigated and stirred up these Indians to treat his Majesty's subjects settling there in the abusive, insolent, hostile manner that they have done.

Resolved that a premium of one hundred pounds be allowed and paid out of the Public Treasury to any persons that shall apprehend y<sup>e</sup> Sd Jesuit within any part of this Province and bring him to Boston and render him to justice.

Advised and consented that warrant be made out to the treasurer to pay unto y<sup>e</sup> Sd Coll. Johnson Harman the above



Sd sum of one hundred pounds for his service in the destruction of y<sup>e</sup> Sd Sebastian Ralle, y<sup>e</sup> Sd sum to be divided among the officers and soldiers, as is directed in the Act for encouraging the persecution of the Indian enemy, etc."

Such was the experience, and too often such was the fate, of the devoted missionary, fired with religious zeal, who left kith and kin and sacrificed all the allurements of the world to bring the light of the gospel and the blessings of civilization to the savages in the wilderness—and such is a picture of the bigotry and intolerance of the times, the malevolence of the people, and an illustration of the perversion of history.

### **The Fostering Care of France.**

France meanwhile pushed the work of exploration, evangelization, and colonization—her conquests of peace, Christianity, and civilization extended westward to the Mississippi, south to the Gulf of Mexico, and in the far north as far as Hudson Bay, whither the Rev. Charles Albanel, S. J., another of the heroic band of devoted missionaries, accompanied by two companions and six Indians, made a tour of exploration and observation in A. D. 1671-2, going overland through an unbroken wilderness from Quebec, to learn the nature of the country, the number of the aborigines, their habits, disposition and needs. Such enterprise and success stimulated the worst passions of the English people, who continued to meet this conquest of peace and Christianity with determined opposition, persecution, and open warfare, which were persisted in from their earliest settlement in the country until victory crowned their efforts by the overthrow of France upon this continent in A. D. 1759 on the plains of Abraham, which was ratified and confirmed by the Treaty of Paris in A. D. 1763.

### **English Aggression and Diplomacy.**

Meanwhile the persecuting people of the British colonies were in turn made to feel the iron heel of despotism of the Mother Country, but less for religious hate and animosity than for revenue, aggrandizement and dominion, and this led to rebellion and bloodshed a few years later in 1775. At this junct-

ture in their affairs the people of the thirteen colonies in revolt very naturally supposed that the people of Canada, smarting under the sting of recent defeat and overthrow, would join with them to combat a common enemy. England fearing this and to conciliate them and win their friendship and aid, as a matter of policy and not of principle, enacted the "Quebec Act," which many Statesmen consider the greatest act of diplomacy ever recorded upon the pages of history. Under its conditions the original settlers in Canada were guaranteed all the rights and privileges, civil and religious, hitherto enjoyed by them under the fostering and protecting laws of France, save allegiance to the Crown—in fact creating an anomaly among the governments of the world, a British dependency under the religion, laws, language and customs of her bitterest enemy and rival—rights and privileges which were openly denounced, violently opposed, and denied to Catholics—even at the expense of life itself—in the British Isles and other British dependencies where the iniquitous penal laws were still in force in all their barbarous cruelty and repulsiveness.

While this restoration of rights had a re-assuring and conciliating effect upon the people of Canada, and tended to win their friendship and allegiance to the crown of England, the motive that prompted it was apparent to all.

Writers of the time assert that the Canadians were in hearty sympathy with the work undertaken by the revolted colonists to throw off the galling yoke of England, and that they would very probably have co-operated with them to aid in driving the Union Jack and all that it symbolizes from the Northern Hemisphere, ending British dominion therein, and extending the boundary of the United States to the most northern limit of the continent, but for the restraining influence of their clergy and the renewed outbreak of bigotry and intolerance with which the revolted colonists denounced the enactment and promulgation of the Quebec Act, and which found noisy expression in their broadsides, pamphlets, meeting-houses, and public gatherings throughout the colonies. This recrudescence of proscription, intolerance, bigotry, and hate was already crystalized into law

in many of the colonies where it was a penal offence for a Catholic priest to enter, and even a capital offence if he performed any of his sacred functions. Granting their rights to the people of Canada by England by the Quebec Act intensified this feeling and led to violent opposition and protest on the part of the colonists, whose bigotry, intolerance, and iniquitous laws against Catholics were well known in Canada. Many students of History now recognize the enactment and promulgation of this Act as the chief cause, if not the only cause in the last analysis, which precipitated the contest and resort to arms on the part of the colonists against the mother country, and as the astute measure which secured Canada and all the vast territory embraced under this name to the British crown.

### **Bigotry of the British Colonists.**

The records of this blind, unreasoning bigotry and hate which now in a more enlightened and tolerant age seem so out of place, and which cost the revolted colonists the loss of a valuable ally, large quantities of much needed military stores, and vast territory, are not now often allowed to see the light of day, and they will have to be sought with difficulty hidden away in the archives of the distant past.

In the Suffolk County (Mass ) resolves sent to the Continental Congress which assembled in Philadelphia in 1774, we read :

“ That the establishment of the Roman Catholic religion and French law in Canada is dangerous in the extreme to the Protestant religion and the civil rights and liberties of all America. Therefore we are obliged to take all proper measures for our security.”

And this congress when it assembled in Philadelphia appointed a committee consisting of Lee, Livingston, and Jay, to frame an address to the people of England stating their position and grievances and demanding a remedy. The notorious bigot, John Jay, whose descendants inherit and manifest his bigotry and intolerance whenever opportunity offers even down to this day, was made chairman of this committee, and to him was assigned the work of drafting the address. He could not let

such a good opportunity pass without incorporating in and giving expression to the general outcry against the Quebec Act, which was so in harmony with his ignorance, bigotry and malevolence, which he did in the following language :

“ Nor can we suppress our astonishment that a British Parliament should ever consent to establish in that country a Religion that has deluged your island in blood and dispersed Impiety, Bigotry, Persecution, Murder and Rebellion through every part of the World.”

Nor can the Congress which approved and authorized the transmission of such sentiments and brazen falsehood be held less culpable or blameworthy ; and yet, in their hour of trial and distress, these same men and their compatriots were not slow to send Franklin and the Catholic Carroll to seek the aid of Catholic France, without which they and their cause must have suffered ignominious defeat, and there would now be no United States to embellish the map of the world.

Facing such hostile speech and sentiment, is it any wonder that the people of Canada refused to hearken to the appeal of Franklin, Chase, and Carroll, who were sent to them as a committee to secure their friendly co-operation ? Is it any wonder that they refused to take up arms for a people who were so openly and avowedly hostile to them and their religion ?

### **The Duplicity of Human Nature.**

It is true that soon after the promulgation of the Quebec Act, and the use of such violent epithets against it to the crown and people of England without avail, as the time drew near for resort to arms the Continental Congress prepared an “Address to the Inhabitants of Quebec,” a portion of which is reproduced to show the change of tone in a very short space of time, and to emphasize the duplicity of human nature :

“ What is offered you by the late Act of Parliament—Liberty of Conscience in your Religion ? No. God gave it to you and the temporal powers with which you have been and are connected finally stipulated for your enjoyment of it. . . . . An insolent Ministry persuade themselves that you will engage



to take up arms by becoming tools in their hands, to assist them in taking that freedom from us treacherously denied to you. . . . . We are too well acquainted with the Liberality of Sentiment distinguishing your nation to imagine that Difference of Religion will prejudice you against a hearty Amity with us."

And again later another Address was sent from which the following extracts are taken: "We perceived the fate of the Protestant and Catholic Colonies to be strongly linked together, and therefore invite you to join with us in resolving to be Free, and in rejecting, with disdain, the Fetters of Slavery, however artfully polished. . . . . The enjoyment of your very religion, in the present system, depends on a Legislature in which you have no Share, and over which you have no Controul, and your Priests are exposed to Expulsion, Banishment, and Ruin, whenever their Wealth and Possessions furnish sufficient Temptation. We are your friends not your enemies."

And another attempt was made in November, 1775, when the Congress appointed Livingston, Paine, and Langdon Commissioners to secure their friendly alliance. Some of their instructions were: "You may assure them that we shall hold their rights as dear as our own. You may and are hereby empowered to declare that we hold sacred the rights of Conscience, and that we shall never molest them in the free enjoyment of their religion."

### **Canadians remain Loyal.**

But all efforts to seduce them from their loyalty to the British Crown proved fruitless. They were doubtless confirmed in their loyalty by the teaching of their church, which makes it a greivous sin to rebel against lawfully constituted authority, by their want of confidence in the professions of their hitherto persecutors and oppressors, and by the restoration of their rights secured to them by that greatest Act of Diplomacy—the Quebec Act. To this Great Britian doubtless owes her vast possessions in the Northern Hemisphere of the Western world today—a territory greater in area than that of the United States.



This far seeing legislation, which was so out of harmony with the bigotry, intolerance, injustice, and persecution of the times, was presented in the House of Lords by Lord Dartmouth, May 2, 1774, and was passed without opposition May 17.

In the house of Commons it was violently assailed, but being a royal measure and demanded by the exigences then confronting the country all opposition was without avail and it passed that body June 13, 1774, received the royal assent June 22 following, and is known in law as 14 Geo. III, Cap. 83. It was to go and went into effect in Canada May 1, 1775.

A few ultra-British writers of our own time, blinded by prejudice and who live in the distant past, strive in vain to prove that England was then actuated solely by a desire to fulfil treaty obligations, that the mutterings of insubordination, discontent, and threats of the neighboring Colonies—which soon after resulted in open warfare and independence—were not an impelling motive, that the government of England—King, Lords and Commons—were imbeciles, and that the enactment and promulgation of the Act was a great mistake from which England has never recovered.

Recalling the many violated treaties recorded against England in the pages of history, which with other things have earned for her the uncomplimentary title of perfidious Albion—her iniquitous, brutal and brutalizing penal laws in force elsewhere in her dominions against the co-religionists of the Canadians, the need she had for a friendly people in this distant land and a friendly harbor to land her army and military stores, and the consensus of history bearing upon the subject, we may dismiss this as only another testimony to the intense morbid intolerance and prejudice, long since crystallized into a national trait, which warps the judgment and renders an impartial and judicial consideration of the facts of history impossible, and now such attempt to prove that England was then governed by fools, needs no other answer than “there is none so blind as those who will not see,” and none so ignorant as those who refuse to learn.

## English Settlers in Canada.

Soon after the conquest, French emigration having practically ceased, England made great efforts to supplant the French population by liberally subsidizing emigration and sending over large numbers of British emigrants, but they being intolerant and full of bitterness toward the religion of the inhabitants, as many, very many of their descendants continue to the present time, as is too painfully evident, they would not locate amongst not near the French settlers in the older portions of the country along the St. Lawrence River, but betook themselves to that portion of the country now known as the Province of Ontario.

After the close of the war of the Revolution a considerable number of the Dutch settlers of New Amsterdam and other adventurous Colonists who swelled their numbers, emigrated to Canada, where they sought and obtained generous bounty—upwards of \$35,000,000.00, vast areas of land, and political preferment—as a panacea for their loyalty. These latter soon after organized under the name of the United Empire Loyalists, which organization their descendants still find it profitable to perpetuate.

Such a people could not long remain in contentment under existing laws, and being turbulent and restive, they so pestered and annoyed the home government with complaint and importunity for a separate government and different laws that they brought about the division of Canada in 1791 into two parts, which were then named Lower Canada and Upper Canada, and a separate parliament was constituted in the latter when the British code became their law, the people of Lower Canada remaining under their then existing form of government.

Agitation and discontent succeeded agitation and discontent in Upper Canada, and envious of the success of the people of the older Province, they succeeded with the aid of the complaisant home government in effecting a union of governments in 1841 when they became known as Canada East and Canada West, and so remained until merged by the confederation of the various provinces in 1867 into the Dominion of Canada, when they were named the Province of Quebec and the Province of Ontario.

Here now is seen the anomaly of two provinces as unlike in origin, religion, tastes, and practices as can well be imagined, yet living in peace and friendly rivalry beside each other, and owing allegiance to a common flag to which they are devotedly loyal.

But the early intolerance and antipathy, founded on race and religious prejudice, has been and is an important if not the determining factor in keeping alive much of the *ancien regime* in the Province of Quebec.

### Loyal to old Customs.

In many of the rural districts of this Province old customs and quaint practices are nearly as well defined and as unique to-day as in the days when first introduced centuries ago under the fostering care of the *fleur de lis* of France.

While innovation and change are apparent in the cities and larger centres of population, doubtless stimulated by travel, observation, and interchange of ideas, by a mixed population with different customs and practices, and in deference to modern demands, yet in rural communities the primitive ways, quaint customs and practices of early times still obtain—and this is more particularly true and striking in the Church, in church management, observances, and practices.

The early colonists being well instructed in their religion and very obedient to its requirements and customs, brought with them a knowledge of the wealth and beauty of the ceremonies of the Church; and the clergy and missionaries being well schooled in and accustomed to the grandeur, beauty, and appropriateness of the Roman ritual, ever sought to give added meaning, beauty, and significance to every Church function by full adherence to and observance of its every requirement—to give outward expression and emphasis to the interior meaning.

### The Lay Element in the Church.

As in the older countries where the Church is governed by canon law the lay element in the Province of Quebec is recognized and accorded its proper voice in the secular affairs of the

Church. On the formal establishment of a parish by the Bishop, the congregation elects three members who are known as *Syndics* or *Marguilliers* (church wardens) who with the pastor constitute the *Fabrique*, a corporation in the eye of the law, a board of management of the temporalities of the Church which may sue and be sued. One of these members at the outset is elected for one year, one for two, and one for three years; one retires each year when at the annual meeting of the parish a new member is elected always leaving two men with experience to continue in office. In long years of experience in and knowledge of the workings of this system, not a single case of friction or unpleasantness is recalled, and the knowledge of business brought to bear in the matter of building, repairing, and the care and management of churches, convents, schools and the like, has been of inestimable benefit and value, and a great lessening of the burdens borne by the priests in the United States.

The parishioners who are elected to this board are recognized as the lay head of the parish, and corresponding honor is paid to them. For their use a special pew is erected upon an elevated *banc* or platform apart from the pews and at the side of the church near the sanctuary railing. It is generally more elaborately constructed than the other pews, is surmounted by a canopy or Crucifix, or both, and is provided with a lighted candle at each end during Mass. The member in his third year of service is the chairman and sits at the head of the pew, and always takes precedence over the other members.

After the singers and acolytes, who are seated within the sanctuary, they receive the *Asperges* before it is bestowed upon the people; on Palm Sunday they receive the palms from the hands of the priest at the Sanctuary rail, and they take precedence at all functions of the Church wherein the laity have part, such as formal gatherings, in the *Fete Dieu* procession and other church functions, escorting the Bishop to and from the railway station on the occasion of his visits, and the like.



## The Services of the Church.

In the services of the Church in rural communities only the Gregorian music is sung by male voices, unless upon exceptional occasions. The singers, gowned in white surplices, sit within the sanctuary and sing the alternate parts. Their work is not that of the modern shrieking soprano, whose disedifying and trilling efforts seem much better suited to divert the mind and attention of the hearers, than to inspire devotion and praise, not that of the paid tenor who is content with nothing less than modern operatic airs, but it is from the heart — sturdy, unaffected, devotional.

During the month of May, fête days, and on special occasions females may be admitted to the organ loft in the gallery and allowed to take part in the singing. In the churches of the cities regular choirs of mixed voices now sing, and figured music of the less florid type is not infrequently performed.

The bell, called the “tongue of the Church,” sounds out the *Angelus* morning, noon, and night, at the elevation; at all Masses, baptisms and weddings; at a death it tolls the age of the deceased, and as soon as the funeral cortege comes within sight of the church its solemn knell adds another to the mournful solemnities of the occasion. When the *Angelus* bell sounds the faithful who are working in the fields turn toward the church, uncover their heads, and recite the prescribed prayers. This is well illustrated by the celebrated painting by Millais.

The *Agapæ*, a custom introduced in Apostolic times, is still observed. A basket and napkins, provided by the *Fabrique*, or parish, are taken home by some member who returns them the following Sunday morning with a sufficient number of loaves of bread which, when cut into small cubes or pieces, will be sufficient for all members of the congregation to receive one. These loaves are placed upon a small table in the sanctuary before the altar where the priest blesses them before Mass. The loaves are then removed to the sacristy by the sacristan, sexton, or beadle, where they are cut into small pieces and distributed to the congregation during Mass — to the Syndics first and then to the rest of the congregation. Every person receiv-



ing a portion devoutly makes the sign of the cross with it and then consumes it. After Mass the basket and napkins are taken away by the person who brought them and the bread, and delivered to his nearest neighbor, who performs a similar service the following Sunday, who returns basket and napkins to his neighbor, and so the work goes continually on throughout the entire parish without interruption.

The origin of this custom has received various explanations. Some writers contend that it had its origin in the brotherly gatherings and feasts of the early Christians (1. Cor. XI), some as typifying the charity with which Christians should feed the poor, others the miraculous multiplication of the loaves and fishes, which typify the Blessed Eucharist, etc.

Be this as it may, the *pain benit* is a living reality in the church of the *habitans*, and its abandonment would be to them a sad innovation and omission from the ceremonial of the Church.

At the *Asperges*, the priest, preceded by the cross-bearer, acolytes, and accompanied by an assistant who carries the holy water, makes the circuit of the church, which gives an added importance, impressiveness and solemnity to the ceremony over the more abridged and perfunctory blessing from within the sanctuary.

A parish Mass is offered by the parish priest in the spring-time to invoke the blessing of God upon the seeds about to be cast into the earth, and it is no infrequent occurrence to hear the announcement from the pulpit that some member of the parish, sometimes named and sometimes nameless, has arranged for a similar Mass—and it sometimes happens that several are provided for and announced at the same time.

Again, Masses are offered for an abundant harvest, for rain, for fair weather, relief from war, epidemics, sickness, for members of a family, for God's blessing upon the Parish, and the like.

Great solemnity is given to all the feasts and festivals of the Church, but to none more than to the *fete Dieu*, or Corpus Christi. For days and weeks previous old and young vie with each other in planting evergreen trees along the route of the

procession, often forming their tops into arches and decorating them with mottoes and banners. Special attention is bestowed upon the repository, and the best that the parishioners can bring is none too good to add to its beauty and attractiveness. Its masses of evergreen and wealth of flowers, rendered more beautiful by scores of lighted candles, make an imposing mid-summer spectacle. Preceding the canopy, which is usually borne by four of the patriarchs of the parish, little girls dressed in white and crowned with garlands strew wild flowers in the pathway from baskets suspended from their necks by brilliant colored ribbons. The scene is imposing and the devoutness of all very impressive and edifying.

Midnight Mass is always celebrated on Christmas eve, for which great preparations are also made to render the occasion worthy of the Feast of the Nativity. The church is always filled to overflowing with devout worshippers, some of whom come many miles, and all enter with zest into the spirit of the joyful season.

The priest makes an annual visit to every family in his parish, accompanied by one or more of the *Syndics*, when he takes an official census, inquires after their spiritual condition, and other matters of importance in accordance with a prescribed form sent out by the Bishop. This serves to more closely unite pastor and people and furnishes reliable statistics of his parishioners and parish.

In rural communities the priest receives for his principal compensation regular tithes which the law imposes upon every husbandman, the payment of which can be enforced by process of law when necessary as other taxes may be collected.

With few exceptions, such as corn and potatoes, every farmer must pay into the granary of *Monsieur le Cure* every twenty-sixth bushel of the crops with which he may be blessed. This tithe or tax is cheerfully and generously paid as a just and reasonable contribution to the maintenance and decency of worship of the God who thus blesses with bountiful harvests. In extensive farming communities it will readily be surmised that the priest's granary is the largest and best filled of all. Under French law all who are baptized into the Catholic Church, but

who do not go to Church, or who may have joined and attend a Protestant church, must pay such tithes to the parish priest, and they can be compelled to do so by law until they publicly abjure the faith according to the ritual prescribed by the Church for such abjuration and apostasy.

In former times, before the advent of the newspaper and telegraph, the news of the parish and such outside news as might come by some traveller or emigrant, was rehearsed before the dispersal of the congregation after Mass, and until very recent times the old custom survived that no laws enacted by the Government had binding force until publicly read and proclaimed (called homologated) from the parish church door after High Mass on a Sunday or Holy day of obligation by the sheriff of the county or other duly deputed officer.

Another custom in strange contrast with the observance of the Puritan Sabbath is the sale of farm products, grain, grass-seed, fruit, vegetables, lambs, pigs, fowls, honey and the like, at auction after Mass, at the church door.

An explanation of this custom is found in the long distances many of the parishioners live away from the church in all directions—six, eight, ten, and even in some cases twenty miles, when others living in an opposite direction might be in need of such things without knowing where to obtain them, besides saving long journeys over bad roads and much valuable time during the busy season.

The cemetery usually adjoins the church, and there seems to be something appropriate in having the dead gathered about the altar before which they worshipped in life, and where their remains will be near their relatives when they assemble to participate in the offices of the Church. The priest accompanied by the cross bearer, thurifer, and acolytes with lighted candles, receives the corpse upon the bier at the church door where he blesses it and then escorts it chanting the *Miserere* or the *De Profundus* to its place at the sanctuary rail before the altar, when the Requiem Mass is sung and the funeral obsequies performed with such pomp and circumstance as the taste of friends may dictate and their means afford, from the plainest low Mass to the most elaborate known to the ritual of the Church, inclu-

ding the draping of the entire church and windows in sombre black.

Travellers meeting a funeral procession usually turn around and face in the direction which it is going, and while it is passing bare their heads if the season permits, and when the deceased was a prominent person the remains are escorted a short distance before the journey is resumed.

Devotions and pious customs and practices are not limited to Sundays and Holy days. They are woven into and become a part of the every day life of the people. They are not so eager for riches as to live well. The members of the family are gathered in prayer every night when the rosary is said and other prayers; a farm is bought and *M. le Cure* is sent for to come and bless it; a house is built, and it may be but a log cabin on the frontier, but before moving in *M. le Cure* comes again and blesses the new home.

When settlements are made in outlying places where parishes have not been organized *Calvaires* are erected by the road-side upon the first land cleared, and here gather the faithful on Sundays and Holy days to join in public prayers. Large crosses and *Calvaires* are erected on other farms as they are taken up and reclaimed from the wilderness, and later when a parish is organized and the people have more means, they are made more elaborate by the erection of a shrine and placing therein a group representing the Holy Family, an Apostle, the patron saint of the parish, the emblems of the Crucifixion—the cross, hammer and nails.

Filial devotion and respect is a very marked characteristic in the homes of the people as becomes the Christian family. New Year's day, *jour de l'An*, is a day of special rejoicing and family reunion when every member of the family from those in the days of earliest childhood to those who have grown to manhood and womanhood, and even those whose heads are crowned with the snows of years, return to the home of their childhood and on bended knees supplicate and receive the aged parents' blessing.

Their sense of justice does not rest upon a human foundation—the vote of a majority—nor does it permit them to violate



the God-given rights of conscience because they are in the majority and can impose their will upon a helpless minority.

Under the laws of their making the Protestant minority are permitted to maintain schools of their own, paying all their school taxes thereto, and if there are not Protestants enough in any school district to maintain a school they are permitted to join with other school districts to do so. And should any Protestant family or families, whose children have reached adult years, live in a Catholic community and no school be necessary, they can elect to what school or institution they wish their taxes paid, no matter where located nor what distance away. With them it is simply a business proposition decided according to justice and not according to fanaticism and bigotry, a practical exemplification of the Golden Rule.

Strange as it may seem, in other Provinces of the Dominion where Protestantism dominates, and where the freedom, liberty and equal rights of Protestantism is volubly and vauntingly proclaimed, the rights of Roman Catholics in educational matters are trampled under foot, and the justice they render unto others where they are in the majority is denied to them by their fellow citizens where they are in the minority.

A convent and school is generally located near the parochial residence and church, and here the young are taught the correct principles of living — the moral faculties are cultivated and developed as well as the intellectual. Character is molded and formed upon true Christian lines, the individual aided and guided to realize the rights of God and his duties toward man — the true end for which he was created — and not turned loose upon society a mere intellectual machine without moral development, balance, symmetry or ballast. Such an education makes a people who put eternity above time, heaven above earth, the spiritual above the temporal, principle above expediency, and an upright life before riches.

Living where they do and as they do, buttressed and supported by their religion, they can be nothing else but Catholics in their religious belief, but at the threshold of the Twentieth century, with the spirit of uneasiness and unrest let loose and spreading over the land, with thousands upon thousands leaving



these salutary props and supports behind, with proselytism backed by abundant means stalking through the land, it may be fairly questioned if the time has not arrived for them to make re-arrangement of studies and give more attention to the deeper truths of their religion, the polemical, and to the sciences.

It is true that it is highest wisdom as well as the teaching of the Scriptures to fully realize that "the Kingdom of Heaven suffereth violence and only the violent bear it away," and "What profiteth it if a man gains the whole world and lose his soul," but it is also true, and has the authority of the Scriptures as well, that when God created man He gave him dominion over the earth with command to go forth and subdue it.

Too many of these unsuspecting, innocent, honest Catholics when they leave home and the surroundings of childhood and the safeguards of their country, are like the hot-house plant when subjected to the vicissitudes of the elements, like the seed that fell upon the barren soil, taking root and flourishing for a short time, but when temptation, indifference, agnosticism, and the other gilded isms of the day overtake them in a non-Catholic atmosphere, wither up and fall away. In these latter days simple faith is a very poor armament with which to meet the warfare of the world, and to overcome the seeming logic and clap-trap of the designing proselytizer, and the scoffing and sneers of the infidel and the agnostic.

In the Province of Quebec there is no extreme wealth and no abject poverty. The people are always ready to assist each other, to extend charity to aid any worthy cause, and to alleviate affliction and suffering. No parish is too poor to aid the Society for the Propagation of the Faith, and their contributions put to shame their more pretentious and wealthy neighbors in the United States. Nearly every parish has also a Society of the Holy Childhood whose contributions have maintained many missionaries in heathen lands and saved many precious souls to heaven.

A daily round of duties well and faithfully performed, reasonable competency and peace of mind, are prized beyond superfluous wealth obtained at the expense of worry, anxiety, disappointments and ruined health.

The sun rises clear and the day is fair—the *habitan* is happy and gives thanks ; morning comes with lowering skies and night brings affliction—the *habitan* sees in this the hand of God, gives praise, and is reconciled. As comes the day, as goes the day—God so ordains, and to His wisdom and goodness be humble submission and praise.

Turning away from the excitement and the artificial life of the popular seaside and mountain resort, and outside the well-worn pathways of tourist travel, a vacation can be pleasantly and profitably spent in the neighboring Province of Quebec with a quaint Christian people, and amid scenes more suggestive of mediævalism than the artificial, stilted, throbbing life of the twentieth century which is in such painful evidence elsewhere.











